



Mission Vision Forward

18

INAUGURATION SYMPOSIUM

Friday, April 17, 2026 | 9-11:30 a.m. | Björling Recital Hall

The inauguration symposium is an exploration of key themes that inform the presidency at Gustavus Adolphus College. Invited speakers will offer reflections on each theme, followed by a response and dialogue with a member of the Gustavus faculty.

9 a.m. | Intellectual Inquiry

As political polarization, information disorder, and artificial intelligence reshape today's intellectual landscape, how might Gustavus cultivate modes of inquiry grounded in curiosity, humility, and moral discernment—preparing students to navigate and contribute wisely to an increasingly complex world?

Speaker: Dr. Tom Katsouleas

Response: Dr. Laura Triplett

9:45 a.m. | Community

What does it mean to build a flourishing community—one that honors human dignity, sustains the natural world, and prepares us to live responsibly with one another in a complex and polarized society?

Speaker: Dr. Amy Donahue

Response: Dr. Yurie Hong

10:30 a.m. | Faith

How might the Lutheran spirit of radical inquiry and intellectual humility shape the future of liberal arts education at Gustavus amid growing complexity and moral urgency, while fostering meaningful dialogue across multifaith, interfaith, and secular perspectives?

Speaker: The Rev. Lamont Wells

Response: Dr. Jon Ivan Gill

Featured Student Performance

Zoom In Zoom Out

Zoom In Zoom Out asks us to consider the prospect of seeking and building hope and community, forged amongst the ruins of isolation and despair. The piece is choreographed by Sarah Hauss, Department of Theatre and Dance, with contributions from the cast from the 2025 Gustavus dance concert, *Wintering*. Dancers include Betsy Anderson '27, Mary Athorp '26, Eleanor Charlson '26, Paige Davidson '26, Ameila Des Marets '28, Hailey Fey '28, Jocelyn Horn '28, Jennifer Jones '27, Joanna Mai '28, Annalise Maiers '28, Dana Marquis '25, Kaia Meyer '26, River Picha '28, Kate Rooker '26, Marisa Schmidt '26, Natalie Thorson '28, Gavia Yount '26, and Zoe Wambeke '27.

Speakers

Tom Katsouleas, PhD, is a physicist, engineer, and academic administrator. He currently serves as a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Connecticut. Previous positions include president of the University of Connecticut, dean of engineering at Duke University, and faculty and administrator at the University of Southern California's School of Engineering.

Laura Triplett, PhD, is professor of geology in the Department of Environment, Geography and Earth Sciences at Gustavus. She serves as the conference chair for Nobel Conference 62, "The Mighty Mississippi: Currents of Change," and previously chaired the 2018 conference, "Living Soil: A Universe Underfoot." Laura's research focuses on water quality in river systems.

Amy Donahue, PhD, is a social scientist whose research has focused on executive leadership, national security, and disaster preparedness. She is professor emeritus of public policy at the University of Connecticut, where she also was vice provost for academic operations. Earlier work includes active-duty service in the U.S. Army and serving as founding director of the Stephenson Disaster Management Institute at Louisiana State University.

Yurie Hong, PhD, is professor in the Department of Greek, Latin, and Classical Studies at Gustavus. In addition to teaching, she serves as director of the MAYDAY! Peace Conference and Gustavus Humanities Endowment. She is active in the Saint Peter-Mankato region as a leader in building stronger community connections and advocating for social change.

The Rev. Lamont Wells, MDiv, is executive director of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU). Wells has also served the ELCA as Director of LuMin, the Lutheran Campus Ministries Network; Director of Mission, Vitality and Partnerships; and President of the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA). In 2021, he was selected for participation in the United Nations Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent.

Jon Ivan Gill, PhD, is associate professor of philosophy at Gustavus. He is the author, most recently, of *Multi/Race/Less/Ness: A Process Philosophy*. He writes on Afrofuturism, religion, atheism, Hip-Hop, and Yoruba and Maya cosmologies. He is an active hip-hop artist and co-owner of the indie record label Serious Cartoons Records and the record store Aesthetic Religion Records and Texts in Saint Peter.

Moderator

Lisa Heldke '82, PhD, is professor of philosophy at Gustavus. She is the author or editor of numerous books, including most recently, *Parasitic Personhood and the Ontology of Eating*. For 10 years, she served as director of the Nobel Conference.

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